

City of Northampton, MA
Public Shade Tree Commission (PSTC)

November 20, 2019

Meeting Minutes

Submitted by: Beth Willard

Meeting Called to Order

Susan Lofthouse, Vice Chair called the meeting to order at 4:34 PM, and announced the audio recording of the meeting.

Members present and absent/introductions:

Member	Present	Time if arriving late or leaving early
Lilly Lombard, Chair	Absent	
Susan Lofthouse, Vice Chair	X	
Molly Hale	X	
Jennifer Werner	X	
Marilyn Castriotta	X	
Rob Postel	X	
Staff & Visitors	Present	Time if arriving late or leaving early
Richard Parasiliti, Tree Warden	X	
Beth Willard, DPW Clerk	X	
David Lukens, Public	X	

Public Comment

- There was no Public Comment.

Approval of previous minutes

- Minutes were read and amended by commission members.

Motion	Motion By:	Seconded By:	Vote:
To approve Nov. 6, 2019 minutes as amended	Jen Werner	Marilyn Castriotta	Yes 5, No 0, Abstain 1

Chair Report

- 1000th Tree Planting November 6th
 - Sue reported it was a great event.
- Neighborhood Tree Planting Program
 - Rob noted that the program had a side effect of creating contacts between neighbors where there had been little or none before.
 - Having an energetic neighborhood person spearhead the effort worked well.
 - Rob noted that the formal application process tended to slow down planting the neighborhood because it is more involved.
 - He feels that both efficiency and momentum is lost in the process.
 - Rich would like to set up guidelines to determine what should go through the neighborhood planting program as opposed to a regular planting.

- One suggestion is to set a threshold limit, and if the number of tree is over that, it qualifies as a neighborhood planting project.
- What to do with the neighborhoods who applied but were not selected was also discussed.
- These questions were tabled for discussion at the next meeting.

Tree Warden Report

- 40" Hackberry root damage on Conz Street
 - Rich noted the PST regulations were updated with a sentence added in the 1st paragraph.
 - The contractor responsible will be getting a letter from the DPW, which Rich read aloud.
- Two 9" Norway Maple root damage on Conz Street
 - The resident & contractor said they didn't know they were Public Shade Trees.
 - The same process will be applied to them.
- Update on Public Shade Tree Regulations
 - Rich plans to do an informational sheet on the Public Right of Way.

STO Updating Report

- Dave focused on Portland, OR ordinances.
 - They have fines of \$16,200+ for trees the size of the Hackberry on Conz St.
 - The offending contractor also bears responsibility for city costs such as attorney fees.
 - Zoning approval in Portland requires:
 - A tree plan showing existing trees of 3"+ diameter,
 - Location of all construction activities and impervious areas,
 - Trees to be retained and protection measures,
 - Trees to be removed, and
 - Information on new trees are to be planted, including the number & species.
 - Dave also noted Portland requires arborists are to register with the city and indicate they have read the tree laws.
 - Portland also has a Heritage Tree category.
 - Their commission nominates trees to the City Council, which then votes on them.
 - The property owner must consent for the tree to be a Heritage Tree, and it is listed on their deed.
 - Replacement of trees is important, and they have a replacement formula for proposed development projects.
- Rich would like a definition of a tree inventory, such as a series of items per tree.
 - Tree inventories here are currently not consistent.

Fall Planting Report

- Rob reported planting continues even though it has gotten cold, and might go into December.
 - There are 30 more trees to plant.
 - Total for the year will be about 370.
 - Saturday planting has now been suspended.
 - Trees are brought into a garage with radiant heating overnight to heat the root balls before planting.

Tree Northampton Updates

- Sue reported Alicia is doing a presentation tomorrow to school children, and Sue will be doing one for the Hadley Girl Scouts on Sunday.
- Tree Northampton has been sending out the UMass tree selection for climate change brochure.
- Two student clubs at JFK Middle School are interested in planting trees, which might be a possibility for an Arbor Day activity.
- They also were contacted by the Western Mass. Pollinator group about in creating a pollinator corridor through the city.
- Sue noted that 2020 is the 50th anniversary of Earth Day.
- Rob said that pruning at Village Hill is expected to start Dec. 3.
 - They will be actually pruning trees that were planted in 2016.
 - Sue mentioned that the UMass researcher studying volunteer pruning training has publicized his workshops, and she will forward the information to the PSTC members.
 - The workshops are planned for Dec. 6 & 7 on South St. and Vernon St.

iTree Northampton, winter plans

- Molly has been playing phone tag with Mollie Freilicher for some dates to meet.
 - She found the program was not easy to use.
 - Jen mentioned that she had a little experience with it, and talked about ways it could be manipulated.

Cooley Dickinson outreach and planning

- Molly mentioned Jonathan Slater has replaced John Lombardi at Cooley Dickenson.
 - She emailed him about planting. He responded, asking to meet to discuss the proposal.
 - Molly had some questions about the plan.
 - Possibly before meeting with Jonathan a site visit would be a good idea, and then plan out a proposal to present to him.
 - Molly & Jen had a phone meeting & Jen took questions to Rich and shared his answers with Molly.
 - They plan to meet for a site visit @ 10 AM on Nov. 22nd.

5th Grade Arbor Day Poster Contest Updates

- Sue recently emailed the list of elementary school principals from last year to get the ball rolling.
- Marilyn had some contest materials from Mollie Freilicher.
- Marilyn plans to get her mailing spreadsheet to Sue.
- Sue has some names of groups with access to 5th graders, and she plans to get those to Marilyn.
- Marilyn would like to get together a strategy for a follow up to the mailings.

5-Year Planting Plan Discussion

- Marilyn mentioned the articles that she had forwarded to the PSTC members.
- Climate change impact is happening faster than expected. As climate change is a priority, the subcommittee felt the focus should be on the downtown area.

- It was proposed that the 2020 priority be to identify & plant every available site within a ¼ mile of City Hall.
- Rob pointed out that without removing existing impermeable surfaces downtown to create new tree pits, there was a distinct lack of available planting sites, and a 40% canopy is not currently achievable downtown.
- Jen noted plantings in tree pits have a shortened life, and a way to increase the root area volume is needed.
- There are also plans to change the face of downtown, and it would not be a good idea to invest trees in an area where they might be removed within 5 – 10 years.
- Rich suggested looking at the edge of the ¼ mile circle around City Hall, look at some of the data points there, draw ¼ mile circles around them, and see what of that might encroach on the downtown area.
- Molly noted that the articles suggested concentrating efforts in areas where there was a near 40% canopy and raising that percentage above 40%.
- Marilyn would like to establish a way of working better with the Planning Dept.
 - The PSTC needs to be involved before the 25% stage of a plan.

Any other business not anticipated by Chair

- None mentioned.

To Do list

- Sue plans to add a discussion of the neighborhood planting program to the agenda for next time & email the workshop flyer to everyone
- Molly plans to contact Mollie Freilicher about iTree, meet with Rich and Jen at Cooley Dickinson Hospital, and contact Mr. Slater.
- Marilyn plans to send Sue the spreadsheet and also relay the information to Lilly.
- Jen plans to meet with Rich and Molly at Cooley Dickinson Hospital, and talk to Sue about iTree.
- Rich plans to meet with Jen and Molly at Cooley Dickinson Hospital, contact Marie Westberg about planting at the Senior Center, send a letter to the contractor at 51 Phillips Place, and plant.
- Rob plans on planting.
- Dave plans to work on the STO.

Motion	Motion By:	Seconded By:	Vote:
To adjourn	Marilyn Castriotta	Sue Lofthouse	Yes 5, No 0, Abstain 0

Meeting adjourned at 5:57 PM.